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EXECUTIVE BOARD

1993 special session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 7 October 1993, at 5.45 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. MAKINDA (United Republic of Tanzania)

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This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent to Mrs. M. A. Rebadavia, Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board, room H-12K, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 5.45 p.m.

ADOPTION OF DECISIONS (E/ICEF/1993/AB/L.15 and 16, E/ICEF/1993/CRP.45)

1. Miss ARIAS (Colombia), Chairman of the Committee on Administration and Finance, introduced a draft recommendation adopted by the Committee (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.45) which, inter alia, authorized the Executive Director to continue the negotiations with the City of New York to acquire UNICEF House (para. 1), and to proceed with the lease/purchase of space at 633 Third Avenue, subject to the various conditions specified in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4.

2. The draft recommendation in document E/ICEF/1993/CRP.45 was adopted.

3. Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) said that, in the discussions in the Committee on Administration and Finance, his delegation had made its position clear regarding the Executive Director's proposals in document E/ICEF/1993/AB/L.15 and the issues raised in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on UNICEF headquarters office accommodation (E/ICEF/1993/AB/L.16). Flexibility, however, had been required of all delegations in order to achieve consensus on the important decision on UNICEF headquarters requirements. Although the United Kingdom still doubted that the Board had chosen the most cost-effective solution, it had joined the consensus just reached. The improvement in New York City's offer of course went some way towards meeting some of the ACABQ concerns; but the fact that at the last moment a decision had had to be taken on 14 floors rather than 13 in the Third Avenue building did not inspire confidence in the rest of the figures provided. If those figures proved not to be accurate, it was clear that the costs would have to be met from existing budgets, with obvious implications for programme delivery. The next step must be to look carefully at the staff projections, which the United Kingdom continued to believe were too high.

4. He again drew the Board's attention to the many useful, cost-saving initiatives put forward in the ACABQ report that, he believed, had not yet been fully considered by the Board and required further attention. The difficulties all delegations had experienced in the discussions just concluded only served to underline the need for urgent reform of the governance of funds and programmes.

5. Mr. POST (Netherlands) observed that, over the previous days, many delegations had made concessions during the very intense discussion of a difficult issue. The United Kingdom delegation, however, was to be particularly commended for its great flexibility in moving from one position to the opposite one. The British attitude should be an example for the Executive Board at the coming session.

6. Miss DIOP (Senegal) joined in commending the United Kingdom delegation.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

7. The CHAIRMAN congratulated the members of the Board on the speed with which they had managed to settle by consensus the longstanding and complex issue of UNICEF headquarters office accommodation. The cost savings achieved at the special session should dispel doubts about the credibility of UNICEF and confirm its resolute commitment to action on behalf of children as its primary goal.

8. She declared the special session of the Executive Board closed.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.